

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of October 6, 2021

The meeting was held at the Community Room of the Brown Public Library, and was also streamed via the Town GoToMeeting account for the benefit of those unable to attend in person.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck, Ruth Ruttenberg, Aaron Rhodes and Chandra Blackmer. Also present was Clerk Mitch Osiecki.

Set/Adjust Agenda: None.

Motion: Ruth moved that the PC request that the Select Board implement an action listed on Page 56 of the Town Plan, specifically: form a committee to include neighborhood residents, students, university officials, landlords, and town officials and staff to resolve conflicts as they arise, and to minimize and mitigate the impacts of student housing on the rental market and housing costs, homes and neighborhoods, and quality of life in Northfield. Seconded by Aaron Rhodes.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

The Planning Commission also expressed the desire to consider ways it might engage in outreach to foster communication among various community groups.

Budget: Laura will touch base with the CVRPC to see if they can help the PC create a budget estimate based on these tasks.

Municipal Planning Grant Application: PC made a few edits to the current grant application document. Ruth is preparing a list of tasks that need to be done.

Motion: Ruth Ruttenberg moved that the Planning Commission applies for a MPG to assist with work on finalizing updates to zoning regulations. Nancy peck seconded.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Laura will submit application when complete. Mitch will share with PC members an updated list of consultants available to assist with this work.

Zoning Regulations: Laura shared that a Select Board member has expressed his opinion that the current regulation addressing requirements for retaining walls places an undue burden on residents.

Mitch offered his view that retaining walls are a fairly uncommon structure. However, there are areas in both the village and rural parts of town that feature significant slopes. Tropical Storm Irene showed the potential damage that can be caused by severe weather events.

There does not appear to be a state statute regarding retaining walls. Mitch will do some research and see if comparable communities have a regulation similar to Northfield.

Approval of Minutes: Nancy Peck moved to approve minutes of September 1 with a couple of minor edits; Aaron Rhodes seconded. (Correct reference to NCDN, strike second paragraph re: MPG Discussion).

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Next Regular Meeting: November 3, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Other tasks: Print copies of the Town Plan (final draft, Adopted by SB on Aug 11). Print on legal paper, rather than standard 8 ½ x 11 sheets.

Adjournment: Aaron Rhodes moved to adjourn; Nancy Peck seconded.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.